

TENNESSEE REGULATORY AUTHORITY



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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AT&T ALLOWED TO CHARGE FOR IN-STATE DIRECTORY ASSISTANCE

NASHVILLE – AT&T’s request to charge for in-state (intrastate) directory assistance was recently approved by the Tennessee Regulatory Authority (TRA) by a 2-1 majority vote. TRA Director Sara Kyle voted in opposition to the company’s request.

The service, which will affect customers of AT&T exclusively, carries a \$1.40 charge for each directory assistance inquiry. The amount is the same flat rate the company charges for the use of state-to-state (interstate) directory assistance, and will apply to all directory assistance inquiries regardless of whether the information is unlisted, non-published, or unavailable.

In view of the state’s competitive directory assistance market, the majority in the decision emphasized the legality of AT&T’s request. They further emphasized that in such a market, consumers have choices, and it is consumers who have the final say as to which provider they choose.

Statewide, there are hundreds of telecommunications companies certified to provide directory assistance -- with some either providing the service at no-charge, or at rates less than or comparable to AT&T’s approved charge. For this reason, the majority deemed the service competitive.

In addition to the recent decision, a “Complaint and Petition for Information” filed by the Tennessee Consumer Advocate Division (CAD) alleging that AT&T failed to properly notify its customers of the rate increase, was denied by the TRA.

The position of the Directors on the CAD’s complaint was that AT&T, after acknowledging that its “Notice” to its customers was inadequate according to Tennessee law, took the required steps to ensure that proper notification was given.

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The CAD further alleged that AT&T had failed to justify the reasonableness of the directory assistance charge.

The ruling mirrors an earlier TRA decision made in September of last year that allowed Sprint to impose a charge for its directory assistance service.

AT&T's directory assistance service provides an allowance for up to fifty (50) inquiries per month for residential customers who have a physical, visual, or learning disability.

The charge goes into effect immediately.

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